

## **AWARDS AND RECOGNITION**

### **325th Civil Engineer Squadron**

#### **Tyndall AFB FL**

The 325th Civil Engineer Squadron Award and Recognition Process Action Team (PAT) has celebrated team success and recognition! The team evaluated the past awards and recognition program and totally reconstructed the squadron's quarterly awards and recognition program.

In November 1992, the PAT formed and began a series of teambuilding and Total Quality Management (TQM) training workshops. The key to the team's success was taking additional time for the "forming, storming, and norming" stages of group development. In mid-January 1993, the team began gathering and analyzing data. The factors identifying the awards and recognition program as a target of opportunity for improvement were well documented. Customers expressed dissatisfaction with the process and stated so in the Air Combat Command (ACC) Quality Culture and Leadership Survey. Squadron personnel spoke up again during an organizational survey (environmental scan) in preparation for the squadron's strategic planning. The final and perhaps most telling evidence in the process was experiencing the diminishing participation; most quarters, award nominations were zero.

The PAT used a seven-step problem-solving model to improve the current process. Customer needs were gathered and used as the team progressed through the problem-solving model. The result was a new, peer-recognition approach to awards and recognition through development of both a formal and informal recognition system for use by all CE personnel, military and civilian.

First, an informal recognition system called "Quick Pat," was developed. Quick Pat is a very rapid and easy way for supervisors, work colleagues, and customers to recognize superior performance, service, or a special deed by an individual. A form was developed, eliminating the need for a special letter to be written. The Quick Pat initiator handwrites the form and drops it into distribution to the flight chief. The person recognized not only gets very fast, positive feedback, but also a lasting record for its or her personnel file; the submitter gets an easy way to recognize superior performance or service. Later, at quarterly CE awards ceremonies, all Quick Pats submitted during the quarter are placed in a drawing box. The commander randomly draws three Quick Pat forms; these three winners receiving a non-monetary incentive prize.

Next, the formal portion of the awards program was evaluated. A well-defined process was already in place, however, customers were not satisfied with the system as it was. The PAT totally revised the system based on customer defined needs. On a quarterly basis, all squadron personnel may now submit any squadron member for an award in one of seven categories. A significant improvement made to the CE award program was the PAT suggestion to form a Quality Award Board (QAB). There are nine members -- one representative per flight -- on the QAB. The QAB's charter is to be the reviewing, evaluating, scoring, and selection committee for all quarterly submittals in the seven categories. Board members apply scores to individual submissions. One role of the QAB chairman is to tally the points assigned by each QAB member to determine the winners in all categories, then identify and announce the

winners to the CE Commander. To ensure they did not overlook anything in the definition of QAB roles and responsibilities, the PAT conducted a role-playing session of a QAB meeting. This technique was extremely valuable, with areas requiring additional clarification quickly and clearly identified. Confusing areas were then modified or clarified prior to the publication of the final package.

To reward the winners from the informal and formal recognition processes, the team discovered that funds may now be used to purchase incentive award items such as logo windbreakers, watches, pens, and mugs. Also new is the award of incentive time off for civilians, which may also be used to recognize quarterly winners.

The PAT placed its final touches on the CE Awards and Recognition Program package in October 1993. Once signed by the CE Commander, this package became the squadron operating policy governing this valuable program. In October 1993, a test program was run; the PAT had done such a thorough job of defining all aspects of this program that no changes were required. To date, 139 personnel have been nominated with winners in all categories; however, as is said in CE, all nominees are winners by virtue of their being nominated!

Another significant success indicator is that the program has become the Tyndall AFD model for awards programs basewide. Requests for copies of the program package have also been received by other AETC bases as well as other MAJCOMs and their bases.

The CE Awards and Recognition Program has certainly received considerable review and attention by numerous people. The program's greatest tribute, however, is that it successfully incorporated the identified needs of CE customers for peer recognition capability into a working reality.

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